United Nations A/61/PV.25

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

25th plenary meeting
Monday, 2 October 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 102 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1)

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Secretary-General has rightly pointed out in his report that the indispensable coordinating role of the United Nations in international affairs, as the most representative intergovernmental institution with universal competence, is of ever-greater importance today in this era of globalization.

A record number of peacekeepers — 88,000 — have been sent to numerous conflict zones. Tension continues in the Middle East. The situation in Iraq continues to cause a lack of stability in the region and in the world in general. Kosovo remains an extremely complicated situation in terms of settling the status of that territory. The international community needs to pay greater attention to the hotbeds of conflicts on the African continent. The terrorist threat also continues to worsen.

The Organization needs, therefore, to work to build up its capabilities not only to respond collectively to modern threats and challenges, but also to prevent them. The Russian Federation, currently holding the presidency of the Group of Eight, gives priority attention to this issue.

Acute global threats and challenges call for the consolidation of collective approaches in international affairs and for further improvement of the instruments of multilateral diplomacy. Only the concerted actions of the international community, led by the United Nations, can ensure security in the world within the framework of the emerging multi-polar architecture of international relations. Steps aimed at strengthening the dialogue between civilizations are an important part of such efforts.

Considerable progress has already been made regarding the adaptation of the mechanisms and methods of the work of the United Nations to new conditions, set forth by the 2005 World Summit; however, further work must be carried out. The main theme of the decisions taken to achieve United Nations reform should be to increase the Organization's overall effectiveness and strengthen its pivotal role in international affairs without prejudice to the intergovernmental character of this unique forum. The successful realization of this task is only possible if the Member States agree as completely as possible on all aspects of these transformations.

Genuinely collective efforts are required to meet the growing demand for the unique potential of the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping. Not all of it, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out, is fully used. The Organization would benefit, for instance, if we made use of the capabilities of the Military Staff Committee and the regional organizations on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Charter.

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The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is expected to help increase the coordination and the effectiveness of international efforts in assisting countries emerging from crises. We think it is important to ensure effective functioning of this intergovernmental body. We intend to actively participate in its work.

The stalling of the international disarmament process does not help to solve the problems in the field of non-proliferation. Collective actions are needed to break the impasse, given the collective nature of our security concerns.

The priority tasks, in our view, are ensuring the activation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space and achieving a comprehensive agreement on that matter, concluding a treaty banning fissile materials production for military purposes and ensuring international information security. We also need to revitalize multilateral efforts in the area of disarmament and arms control within the Conference on Disarmament and the relevant bodies of the United Nations.

We think it is of primary importance to ensure the rule of law. Full implementation of this principle in international affairs guarantees stability in the world. One of its key components is the fight against impunity. In this area, priority is given to national authorities, which, when necessary, should have the possibility of seeking the help of this Organization. We agree with the Secretary-General that the fight against impunity and efforts to maintain peace should complement each other.

The record of international justice, in our view, has not been entirely successful. The activities of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia have revealed serious shortcomings: political bias in decisions and the significant cost of court proceedings. We have great expectations for the International Criminal Court. We anticipate that this body of justice will make a substantial contribution to the fight against impunity.

Russia views the formation of an effective system of security, with the United Nations holding a central coordinating role, as a key aspect in the fight against international terrorism. The recent adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy provides great potential for reinforcing the systemic work of the international community in the field of fighting terror. We support the point raised in the report that describes the need to build Member States' counter-terrorist capabilities through the establishment of an effective system of technical assistance. We believe, however, that the major focus here should be the improvement of the quality of the dialogue between States and the Security Council committees established to fight terrorism, as well as on enhancing the capacity of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

We agree that now, after the adoption of the Global Strategy against Terrorism, it is a matter of priority to finish the work on the draft of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Intensified efforts are needed to accomplish this as soon as possible.

On the whole, we are satisfied with the analysis of the activities of the Organization in the field of human rights protection. More specifically, we share the opinion that it is necessary to establish and strengthen national systems for the protection and promotion of human rights. Such efforts are needed to facilitate the strengthening of the international regime of human rights protection, which is, in our firm belief, a major long-term priority in this field.

The establishment by the Human Rights Council of two intersessional intergovernmental open-ended working groups on the mechanism of universal periodic reviews and on optimization of the system of special procedures — legacies of the Sub-Commission of the Commission on Human Rights — are undoubtedly positive events. We hope that the working groups will eventually be able to start their work within the proposed format, as envisaged by the relevant resolutions of the first session of the Council, but without limiting themselves to holding informal consultations on the issues within their mandate.

Today, the focus on the issues of development and the strengthening of democracy, as well as the interaction between the United Nations and civil society, based on a broad range of issues on the international agenda, has become more important than ever and deserves special consideration by taking into account the importance and scope of the issues. I would like to highlight the major point, namely, the need to have transparent, unbiased and objective discussions of the entire range of issues, in accordance

with the United Nations Charter and guided by the principles of universality.

On the whole, we share the positive assessments of the Secretary-General of the work done to fulfil the decisions of the Summit aimed at increasing the effectiveness of social and economic activities of the entire United Nations system, and of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the same time, the Organization's potential, in particular, its operational segment, should be used more effectively in order to assist the countries in need. We believe it is impermissible to politicize the work of United Nations operational funds and programmes.

In addition, we note the importance of resolving the problem of overall system coherence and we are looking forward to the report of the high-level panel on that issue. We are willing to have substantive discussions of all realistic proposals.

We note with satisfaction that the issues of sustainable development and the global problems of health care are among the priorities in the report. We share the correct conclusion of the Secretary-General that, since natural disasters have become more frequent, it is necessary to build up the capabilities of the Organization that are aimed at decreasing the threat and enhancing readiness. On our part, we intend to make practical contributions to resolving such acute global problems as climate change, eradication of infectious diseases and a sustainable energy supply. The last two issues are the priorities of the Russian presidency of the Group of Eight.

The report also gives a fairly balanced presentation of humanitarian issues. Justifiable emphasis is given to the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund, which is called upon to ensure reliable access to financial resources for preserving lives during the earliest stages of humanitarian response and in planning long-term humanitarian operations.

We deem it necessary for the General Assembly to draft the relevant resolution, with due regard for the views of the Secretary-General favouring a cluster approach to ensure greater coherence in the work of humanitarian operations in the field. The report highlights the difficulties in enhancing humanitarian coordination at the local level, which are related, in our view, to the difficult task of elaborating suitable methods of cooperation with national Governments that protect the sovereign right of the countries to independently determine the priorities of the humanitarian response and ways to provide it.

We agree with the recommendation favouring, in accordance with existing commitments, the provision of international assistance towards fulfilment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development programme, specifically as regards the reduction of the debt burden and fighting HIV/AIDS.

We attach great significance to improving and enhancing the functional effectiveness and transparency of the administrative, financial and personnel units of the United Nations, as well as to implementing the General Assembly decisions on the reform of the Organization. The most important issues of the ongoing reform are increasing the efficiency of the Secretariat, ensuring greater professionalism and productivity of the staff, clear accountability and responsibility to Member States for the end results.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Let me begin by paying tribute to the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization. He once again has shown us a vision of the future, as well as a road map for getting there. As he ends his remarkable tenure as Secretary-General, it is appropriate that the report also takes stock of our collective accomplishments to date. The report leaves no doubt that the Secretary-General leaves behind an Organization that is stronger and more effective than the one he found ten years ago. We thank him for the persistence, energy and clarity of purpose that he has brought to this task.

More than anything, the report of the Secretary-General validates the truism that reform is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing process that requires sustained commitment. On the one hand, we have made progress in recent years. The design and establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the creation of the new Human Rights Council and the recent adoption of a counter-terrorism strategy are accomplishments in their own right and a testament to our shared determination to tackle contemporary challenges.

On the other hand, much work is still needed to bring to life those innovations in a meaningful way. The Millennium Development Goals are perhaps most illustrative of that point. On the one hand, they have focused the world's attention as never before on a concrete set of objectives for improving the lives of the

world's poorest people. On the other hand, improvements in nutrition, sanitation, education and medical care remain elusive for a full fifth of the world's population, increasing pressure on the development architecture of the United Nations.

That, coupled with the increased demand for United Nations field operations, especially peace support and humanitarian operations, has not only changed the nature of the Organization, but also enlarged managerial risk within it. Above all, those demands underscore the urgency of a reinvigorated and renewed United Nations.

In that regard, Canada welcomes the emphasis of the Secretary-General on the interconnectedness of development, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, human rights and the rule of law, all of which are central to long-term global stability. We further welcome the new focus in this year's report on the role of non-State actors, whose partnership is essential to the success of the United Nations.

As we look at the agenda for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, it is clear that there will be no shortage of work for Member States and the principal organs of the United Nations. But several challenges stand out as deserving special attention in the months ahead.

First, there is an urgent need to ensure that the new institutions we have created — the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission — get off to the right start. In the coming months, a key priority for Canada will be to ensure that the working methods of those bodies are flexible enough to succeed in the task at hand. In particular, it is imperative that the Human Rights Council move beyond the politicized squabbles that hobbled and discredited its predecessor, that the universal periodic review mechanism is implemented effectively and that stronger links are built between the normative and the operational human rights work of the Organization.

Similarly, the Peacebuilding Commission, which will convene its first country-specific meetings in two weeks time, must produce a discernable improvement in the Organization's post-conflict peacebuilding record. Member States must show themselves capable of contributing to the solution, by bringing together the fragmented operational capacity within the Organization and the political authority of the principal organs. Embracing that informal coordination function is key to ensuring that the countries it engages with do not suffer the fate of Timor-Leste and other post-conflict societies that have resolved conflicts only to relapse into a new round of violence within a few short years.

(*spoke in French*)

The second critical piece of unfinished business will be to advance Secretariat and management reforms in order to enable the effective pursuit of a shared agenda with real results.

In this regard, one of the most important reform measures to have been put in place during the Secretary-General's term in office is that of results-based budgeting. That system should be expanded. Similarly, stronger, more independent oversight mechanisms and more robust accountability are key priorities for this session. Finally, we look forward to making progress in reforming human resource management with a view to developing the talented, mobile and integrated workforce that the Organization requires.

It has been said that we live in a world of new threats and old institutions. It is clear from the tenth and final report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization that we owe him a debt of gratitude for having transformed this institution so that it can better confront current challenges. As we move forward, the Assembly can rest assured that Canada remains fully committed to continuing the reforms that the Secretary-General has set in motion with a view to achieving our shared vision of a more effective United Nations and a more peaceful, prosperous world.

Mr. Kapoma (Zambia): My delegation joins others in congratulating the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his good report contained in document A/61/1. The report provides us with a clear basis for our deliberations. My delegation is pleased that the report gives a broad view of various issues that affect humankind. These issues include development, peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian law and the strengthening of the United Nations.

Zambia reaffirms its support for multilateralism as a platform on the basis of which issues of global concern should be resolved. We agree that a new vision of collective security is required through which States Members of the United Nations should address threats

such as war, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, infectious diseases, extreme poverty and environmental degradation.

With regard to the ongoing reform of the United Nations, Zambia believes that it should address the concerns of Member States, especially developing countries. We believe that global partnership for development will facilitate fair participation in the global market by the developing and least developed countries. We call for support from the international community in the areas of trade and investment — areas with regard to which developing countries hope to attain the sustainable targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, we commend the Secretary-General for having launched, in July 2000, the Global Compact. Zambia welcomes that development initiative. We believe that the Global Compact will assist our country in its development efforts in many ways.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address global issues effectively, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. World leaders reaffirmed the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of our Organization. It is for this reason that we should ensure that measures to strengthen the role of the General Assembly are adopted at this session.

Regarding the Security Council, a body charged with the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, Zambia reaffirms the need for its reform, in terms of both its enlargement and its working methods. In this regard, Zambia aligns itself with the well-known position taken by the African Union on this matter. Indeed, the Council should be reformed so that it becomes more democratic, transparent and responsive to the challenges of the twenty-first century. In his report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General emphasized that the reform of the United Nations would not be complete without the reform of the Security Council. We agree with him.

The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is important in the socio-economic development of any civilization, just as upholding the tenets of good governance is of cardinal importance for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, Zambia reaffirms its commitment to support the work of the newly established Human Rights Council. As a member of that Council, Zambia commits itself to ensuring that it is effective and efficient.

Other issues of concern to my delegation include extreme poverty and disease. The number of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and the number of deaths caused by AIDS have continued to grow globally. Zambia, like many other developing countries adversely affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, supports efforts by the international community to combat those diseases. We therefore appeal to the international community to honour the commitments made in the context of various forums aimed at increasing and enhancing aid to developing countries. The fight against HIV/AIDS is a global one which must be sustained by the international community at all levels. It is, indeed, a fight which must be won if the future is to be brighter and more assured for coming generations.

In conclusion, Zambia believes that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will depend on Member States' political will. We believe that development, security and human rights are important and that they reinforce each other. There is a need, therefore, for the global partnership for development to achieve the agreed Millennium Development Goals. In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders expressed confidence that humanity could make measurable progress towards peace, security, disarmament, human rights, democracy and good governance. Let us therefore rise to the challenge and ensure the fulfilment of those objectives.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): The annual report (A/61/1) of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on the work of the Organization is an excellent overview of achievements during the past year — and, indeed, of earlier achievements — as well as of the complex challenges facing us. It serves as a clear reminder — for some, it might be a revelation — that the United Nations is not a talking shop. As we debate this report, there are 30,000 civilian staff serving in the field and 65,000 troops and military observers, 7,500 police officers and more than 15,000 international and local civilian personnel serving in 15 peacekeeping operations and three special political or peacebuilding

missions, to mention only one important aspect of United Nations operations, peace and security. The report also helps us to maintain a focus on the main issue: the need for good governance and accountability, both within the Organization and in Member States.

Strengthening the United Nations will continue to be one of the principal tasks at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Certainly, real progress was made during the previous session with the establishment of the new Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Central Emergency Response Fund. However, we have only established the framework; the real work is still ahead of us. Iceland trusts that the new mechanisms, along with the determination of Member States, will contribute to the strengthening of the United Nations.

We concur with the Secretary-General that reform of the United Nations should include reform of the Security Council. As stated on many occasions, Iceland wants comprehensive reform of the Security Council in terms of both expansion and working methods. Both the permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council should increase in number in order to better reflect today's world.

In her statement in the general debate last week (see A/61/PV.20), the Foreign Minister of Iceland emphasized development issues, and in particular sustainable development. The Foreign Minister reaffirmed Iceland's strong commitment to the Doha Development Agenda. Iceland sees the suspension of the global trade talks as a major setback. We welcome and support international efforts to provide debt relief to the poorest countries. We also applaud those countries that have committed themselves to increasing their official development assistance. Over the next three years, Iceland's development assistance will nearly triple, and we are determined to do even more.

Iceland supports what Ambassador Kirsti Lintonen of Finland said earlier today (see A/61/PV.24) about the global response to HIV/AIDS and the urgent need for concerted action in all areas with regard to the development of the African continent. Indeed, the bulk of Iceland's development cooperation is with African countries.

We want to see more determined efforts by development partners and United Nations agencies to pursue gender equality. In that connection, we suggest that the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women must be given more weight within the United Nations.

We agree with the Secretary-General that a major challenge for all countries in the years ahead is the development of new and sustainable energy sources. Iceland will continue to contribute to work in that field.

The protection and promotion of fundamental human rights is one of the primary aims of the United Nations. The Secretary-General notes in his report the significantly increased importance of human rights in the work of the Organization. Iceland welcomes that development. The establishment of the Human Rights Council is an example of such progress. In that connection, it is important that the universal periodic review system of the new Human Rights Council be up and running soon. Member States have accepted the fact that we have the responsibility to protect all people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Now we have to make sure that we fulfil that responsibility.

The United Nations is the premier international Organization responsible for maintaining peace and security. That is a complex, multidimensional task. The United Nations has begun to put more emphasis on preventing conflict before it develops. Indeed, that is in line with the holistic approach that we have increasingly taken in our work. There can be no security without development and no development without security, as has so often been said in this Hall.

For the past decade — and especially since 11 September 2001 — we have been confronted with terrorism, which now constitutes one of the major threats to international peace and security. While welcoming the new United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), adopted by consensus in the General Assembly, Iceland emphasizes that it is important that Member States agree on the next step: a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We need a concerted effort — including at the highest political levels in capitals — in order to reach agreement on the outstanding issues related to a draft comprehensive convention.

Reining in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and reinvigorating disarmament initiatives are also essential to long-term peace and security. Sadly, the 2005 World Summit, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons and the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects yielded no results in that regard. The Secretary-General is right to point out the danger of terrorism linked to weapons of mass destruction. Iceland supports his call for more concerted action on small arms, which cause intolerable destruction among large sections of the world's population.

Madam President, your predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, repeatedly reminded us that the United Nations and multilateralism are indispensable in our world today, where threats are often global in scale. All of us need to be reminded of that. Indeed, we agree with what Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan said on the subject earlier in this debate, at the 24th plenary meeting. The United Nations will continue to need visionary, courageous and skilful leadership.

During his 10 years at the helm of the Secretariat, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has played a leading role in "bringing new life to the Organization", to quote the Norwegian Nobel Committee. As this is Mr. Annan's last report on the work of the United Nations, I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and for working tirelessly — to quote the Nobel Committee once again — "for a better organized and more peaceful world".

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to your high office and to express confidence that under your skilful stewardship, the sixty-first session of the General Assembly will be successful and fruitful.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his comprehensive report (A/61/1), which not only describes achievements and problems encountered in the areas of development, security and human rights, but also elaborates on new trends in the global interrelationship, such as interactions with civil society and the business community.

Kazakhstan supports a multipronged strategy aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Real progress in that area is possible if all Member States fulfil their obligations regarding nuclear disarmament and the vertical and horizontal non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakhstan is convinced that the international community, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, should encourage in every possible way the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. The establishment of such zones promotes international peace and security.

We have no doubt that the signing, in Semipalatinsk in September 2006, of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia is a crucial breakthrough in the efforts to ensure regional and global stability and security. The Central Asian States are ready to continue consultations with the permanent members of the Security Council on the issue of that Treaty's entry into force.

Kazakhstan firmly supports peacekeeping activities and international efforts to enhance the United Nations peacekeeping capacity.

We commend the establishment of a newly elected body within the United Nations system — the Peacebuilding Commission — that was set up thanks to the intensive efforts of all delegations, which were able to reach a compromise through negotiations.

Convinced that combating terrorism is a top priority, Kazakhstan commends the launch of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We view the five pillars of the concept of counter-terrorism action as integral elements of the efforts to avert the threat of terrorism. Kazakhstan believes that international cooperation to fight terrorism should be developed in full conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

With illegal routes of delivery of Afghan drugs from Asia to Europe running through its territory, Kazakhstan makes every effort to address that threat. The fight can be effective only if we join our efforts and mobilize the resources of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It is precisely for that reason that Kazakhstan has supported the United Nations initiative to set up in Kazakhstan a Central Asian regional information and coordination centre to fight illegal drug trafficking.

We would like to express gratitude to the Asian countries for supporting the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, which undoubtedly strengthens stability and confidence-

building measures in Asia and will create favourable conditions for interaction in the interests of the prosperity and sustainable development of our countries.

Development issues should continue to be among the priority items of the agenda of the principal bodies of the United Nations. The implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome will remain an important priority for the Organization in the coming period. Kazakhstan is committed to its undertakings regarding the Millennium Development Goals and works continuously to implement its own long-term strategies — "Kazakhstan 2030" — and an innovative industrial economic development programme. The Government's main objective in the area of economic policies is to ensure that Kazakhstan joins the ranks of the most competitive economies.

Regional integration is an adequate way to meet the challenges of the modern world. Kazakhstan attaches great importance to cooperation with States on a broad range of issues within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and other regional economic organizations. In April 2007, Kazakhstan will host the sixty-third session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

As the world's largest landlocked country, Kazakhstan urges the international community, and above all the developed countries, to make every effort to meet the needs of the least developed and developing landlocked countries. Kazakhstan stands for the global partnership for development through the establishment of an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trade and financial system.

Kazakhstan trusts that the United Nations will continue to play a leading role in coordinating relief operations and believes that the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund will allow the Organization to launch relief operations in the early days of crises and ensure more adequate distribution of relief. Kazakhstan was among the first countries to make a voluntary contribution to the Fund.

Kazakhstan views the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Council as an important step in the process of reforming the Organization and the efforts to enhance its action to protect human rights. In our view, that body should focus on the most burning human rights issues on the basis of an unbiased and objective analysis of situations throughout the world and the provision of effective recommendations.

We pay close attention to the promotion of democracy, the building of civil society and the enhancement of inter-ethnic and inter-faith accord in the country.

We express our appreciation to all States that have supported Kazakhstan's candidature for the presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2009. The Government of Kazakhstan's policy to maintain and promote a climate of tolerance and accord in society constitutes an integral part of our international efforts to foster the culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations.

It is no accident that Kazakhstan has hosted a forum of leaders of world and traditional religions. The second congress has just completed its deliberations in Astana. Religious leaders adopted a declaration calling for an active dialogue among religions. We cannot allow the use of religious differences as an instrument of hatred and strife, and we have to save humanity from a global clash of religions and cultures. The congress has become Kazakhstan's contribution to global dialogue among religions.

As stated in the report under consideration, "if history judges 2005 for its promises, then 2006 must be judged on implementation" (*A/61/1, para. 27*). We strongly believe that this year and upcoming years must be an era of implementation of goals we have already set up.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): At the outset, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his annual report on the work of the Organization. We take note with satisfaction that the report highlights the goals of development and achieving peace and security as the first priorities on the agenda of the Organization. We welcome the incorporation of the report on the progress made in implementing the Millennium Declaration into the Secretary-General's report.

We are pleased to note that cooperation for development has enjoyed a higher priority on the agenda of the United Nations and that achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been placed at the core of the United Nations global

activities. That corresponds to the priority attached to the achievement of the MDGs by Governments and peoples around the world, as mentioned in the report. While noting, on the one hand, the achievements recorded — such as the drop in the world's proportion of people living in extreme poverty; the reduction in the child mortality rates in developing countries; the increase in the number of people having access to improved sanitation; the increase in the primary enrolment ratios in developing regions of the world; and the level of commitment of not only the Governments, but also the general, public and the political momentum resulting therefrom — we share the concern of the Secretary-General that progress has been uneven and that the ongoing levels of human deprivation remain staggering. The statistics he has offered in many areas are in fact daunting.

One year has elapsed since our leaders adopted the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, in which important commitments were made in order to enable developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. The commitments are many and concrete, ranging from embedding the global goals into country-level processes to new targets in most important areas of activity. The Secretary-General has called 2005 a year of commitments.

We welcome the fact that to help implement these commitments a number of positive steps have been undertaken, including the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and the timetables set by many countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to meet the official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product income by 2015. Looking back at the implementation of those commitments over the past year, however, we share the view that, in spite of some advances, progress is modest and too incomplete. The increase in the level of ODA is far from enough to support real ground-level investment in the neediest countries; the suspension of the Doha development round caused further disappointment.

Developing countries continue to suffer from hardships caused by the pressure of globalization and strengthened protectionism in a number of developed countries. A global partnership for development is yet to be seen. Partnership for development has been chosen as the theme of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. It is the view of my delegation that at this session we have to focus on mobilizing further political will to undertake concrete action to implement our commitments. Our delegation looks forward to contributing to this process.

The past year saw both bright and dark spots in the world's overall peace and security picture. They included the conclusion of the peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone and its transformation to a peacebuilding mission, and the regression towards violence in Timor-Leste just one year after the United Nations pulled its last soldiers out of that country in May 2005. Prolonged armed conflicts and civil wars continued to threaten the lives of millions of people and pushed many others into miserable conditions. The recent conflict in Lebanon added another dark spot to the picture. The performance, progress and shortcomings of the Organization in bringing peace and security to the countries concerned have been analysed in the report.

Let me reaffirm our view that conflict and tension can be resolved only through dialogue and negotiation on the basis of mutual trust and understanding, not through unilateral actions. The crucial role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security must be reaffirmed and further enhanced.

Terrorism continues to pose a dangerous threat to peace and security. We reaffirm our strong condemnation of acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We support the Secretary-General's call for the international community to continue to work together to confront and defeat terrorism. In our opinion, the fight against terrorism can be won only through comprehensive and balanced measures conducted in full conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. Furthermore, this fight should avoid any application of selectivity and double standards, and the root causes of terrorism need to be fully addressed.

Taking note of the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), we look forward to working with other delegations with a view to the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

It has been the shared conviction of Member States that the United Nations should be reformed in order to improve its effectiveness, democratization and modes of operation on the basis of the fundamental

principles enshrined in the Charter. While welcoming initial successes in the United Nations reform process, such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, we realize that much remains to be done. Measures are needed to consolidate the central role and power of the General Assembly. The Economic and Social Council must be reformed to be able to better support the economic and social development activities of Member States. We regret the delay in this connection and pledge to work with other delegations towards an early solution.

The Security Council should be reformed in terms of both its composition and its methods of work in order to ensure that it really represents the concerns and interests of all United Nations Member States, as stipulated in the Charter. In this connection, I would like again to state our view that Council membership should be expanded in both categories and that developing countries should be more adequately represented on the Council.

Mr. Mbuende (Namibia): I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on the presentation of an excellent report on the work of the Organization (A61/1). I am particularly intrigued by the manner in which the report is presented. The first thing that attracted my attention was the integration of the report on progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration into the report on the work of the Organization instead of its being the subject of a separate report, as was the case in the past.

This development not only augurs well for greater synergy and coherence in the activities of the Organization; more important, it places the development agenda at centre stage in the work of the Organization. That is to say, the objective of attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is not an appendix, but rather a matter on which the performance of our Organization, and of us as individual Members, can be judged.

The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) set ambitious goals, but they can certainly be attained, given the natural, human and financial resources at our disposal globally. The world has enough resources to make poverty a thing of the past. The prevalence of poverty is not a result of lack of resources, but rather of how they have been deployed. They have not been deployed in the service of humanity as a whole. The question we have to answer is whether we have taken the first steps to correct that situation. We call on all Member States to translate their commitments under the Millennium Declaration into action.

We welcome the inclusion in the report of what the Secretary-General calls "global constituencies". The recognition that the United Nations has to learn to work with business and civil society is important. Development is a collective responsibility. Non-State actors have experience and resources that can be harnessed and mainstreamed into the global development agenda. They are equally important players in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. An effective mechanism for cooperation has thus to be put in place. The alignment of corporate activities with the broader United Nations goals, programmes and projects promises to bring greater benefits to all in many areas. In this regard, we call for the strengthening of the Global Compact Office.

Notwithstanding the good efforts of the United Nations and individual countries in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping, peace remains an elusive goal in many parts of the world. The situation in the Middle East is of grave concern. It has shown the ugly face of human destructiveness. We hope that peace will prevail over war so that the people of that region can live in good-neighbourliness, peace and harmony.

The situations in a number of African countries where there are United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as the Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea and Côte d'Ivoire, to mention but a few, warrant our collective urgent attention in order to ensure that those operations are crowned with success. Africa is the continent that, because of its level of development, can least afford internal strife. There cannot be development without peace and security. War causes and exacerbates poverty. The people of Africa are already suffering from poverty induced by the legacy of colonialism, unjust international economic relations, corruption, bad governance, environmental degradation and other natural calamities. Certainly, the continent does not need war on top of all that. We need peace now.

Namibia will leave no stone unturned in the quest for peace. It is against this background that we have contributed troops, military observers and police officers to various United Nations missions in Burundi, Haiti, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the

Sudan and Kosovo, among others. Let us give peace a chance. Namibia is able and willing to make its contribution to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

We are gravely concerned with the lack of progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Nuclear weapons pose an especially terrible threat. In Namibia's view, this terrible threat can cease only when all States adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and when its article VI is fully implemented. We would like to see a transparent multilateral process leading to the total denuclearization of the world. Only if nuclear weapons are completely eliminated will our world be safe from them, including from the chance that they fall into the hands of non-State actors. At the same time, Namibia would like to reassert the right of all countries to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. In this regard, it is important for industrialized countries to share their knowledge, technical know-how and experience with developing countries.

We are happy to note that 164 countries have ratified the Kyoto Protocol and we urge those that have not done so to ratify that Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Environmental degradation and the prospects of climate change pose a serious threat to humanity. Among other things, it has the potential to further entrench injustices and exacerbate poverty. Given the knowledge divide, rich countries have greater capacity to deal with the consequences of an environmental disaster than poor countries.

The United Nations is the hope of the poor nations. It is therefore important to speed up the work on the reform of the Organization through a review of mandates and the reform of the Security Council. We hope that reform of the Security Council, apart from broadening participation, representation and transparency, among other things, will result in speedy decision-making and increased resource allocation for conflicts resolutions in Africa in particular.

Equally important is the reform and strengthening of the Economic and Social Council to play a central role of promoting policy dialogue, development cooperation, post-conflict reconstruction and coordination. We regret the delay in the adoption of a resolution on reform of the Economic and Social Council that provides for follow-up, monitoring, and ensuring accountability of Member States in fulfilling their commitments to the partnership for development.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, my delegation is grateful to you for having organized this debate on the report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), which the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, introduced on 19 September, at the 10th plenary meeting, in a very moving speech which continues to resonate in this Hall.

My delegation is pleased with the exhaustive assessment of the 10 years that he has spent in his important office. The facts are presented with extreme meticulousness. We are pleased to note the remarkable progress that has been achieved and at the same time are deeply concerned about the constraints encountered by the Organization in tackling the major challenges which humankind had to face during this period. There is no doubt that the United Nations has contributed significantly to changing the face of the world. It has also greatly changed itself in the course of this period, as reflected in the bodies created within the framework of the reform and new structures that have enriched the Secretariat so that it can rise to the level of its mission.

My country shares the pride of the Secretary-General, who unreservedly dedicated himself to a mission with unlimited demands. Benin was also a stakeholder in the construction and orchestration of multilateral cooperation which has been the spirit of the major projects carried out by the Organization. They have undeniably shaped the world at the intersection of the national interests of Member States and the ideals enshrined in the Charter. My country pays tribute to the Secretary-General, who, on the situations he has managed, has constantly striven to obtain the best possible outcomes, given the constraints and opportunities linked to the circumstances of the moment.

One of the most striking achievements of this period was the consensus formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which made it possible to refocus the action of the Organization on the crucial issue of promoting development. The unequivocal commitment of the United Nations to eradicate poverty is an undeniable achievement that the Secretary-General rightly considers to be unprecedented in human history.

My country, as Chair of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Global Coordination Bureau,

welcomes the Secretary-General's invaluable contribution to refocusing the United Nations agenda. It is true that the United Nations resolutely took the lead when it came to the follow-up of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, as we saw clearly in the High-level Meeting held in New York on 18 and 19 September 2006 for a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action (see A/61/PV.7-9).

In addition to the High-level Meeting, the very significant exchanges which took place during the course of the general debate at the sixty-first session, on the theme of promoting a global partnership for achieving the Development Goals, make it possible to consider prospects in that area in a more positive light.

Such a partnership means a clear identification of the commitments of stakeholders and a declared willingness to assume them in good faith. In this regard, the report of the Secretary-General takes stock of the situation, enabling Member States to know where we stand and what remains to be done, as well as the role that the United Nations can play for concerted and coordinated action in this area.

The report of the Secretary-General stresses the mobilization of adequate resources and the need to resume multilateral trade negotiations within the framework of the Doha round in order to establish an equitable trade regime between wealthy countries and developing countries, and on the protection of the environment. This provides us with very specific terms of reference for the action to be taken to achieve the goals we have set, which we must pursue today, given our improved understanding of the interdependence of Member States and its implications.

That approach, highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, inevitably places Africa at the centre of the major United Nations priorities. It must remain so for the next decade. We even dare to hope that the international community will continue to shoulder its substantial responsibility for meeting Africa's specific needs by more resolutely and consistently helping to combat the ills impeding its progress, whether in promoting governance, controlling pandemics or mobilizing resources to develop its productive capacities.

The maintenance of peace and security is a central area of action for the United Nations; it is also the area in which the Organization has been most called upon to work over the past 10 years. We have reason to welcome the great readiness shown by the international community to deploy human and financial resources to deal with armed conflicts and to monitor the considerable progress made by countries emerging from conflict, particularly in the area of peacebuilding.

We agree with the Secretary-General that much remains to be done with regard to measures to prevent the eruption of further armed conflicts. Today, when we are seeing the limits of the exponential growth of peacekeeping operations, the United Nations must be able to show greater effectiveness in the area of conflict prevention. Here, the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891) are convincingly justified.

The Secretary-General's analysis of developments over the past 10 years with respect to the crucial issues of disarmament and non-proliferation challenges the Member States that are responsible for the stalemate in that area since 2000. Indeed, it is regrettable that no major initiative has been taken to eliminate the risk of nuclear conflagration, which continues to threaten humanity because of the high alert level of the forces of nuclear-weapon States and because they maintain considerable stocks of nuclear weapons.

The Secretary-General rightly recalls the need to avert the terrifying instability that would result from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and particularly from their acquisition by non-State actors. In that regard, we cannot forget that Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) was adopted as a conservative measure to deal with a legal vacuum that must be filled by negotiating an international convention on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, we are pleased that the Secretary-General echoed the concerns of countries that are victims of the harmful consequences of their uncontrolled spread, due to an illicit trade that persists despite the efforts to combat it. At the present session, it is important for the General Assembly to agree on measures to strengthen those

efforts in the light of the discussions that took place at the Review Conference held in June and July 2006.

Promoting the rule of law and human rights is essential to preserve human dignity, maintain peace and promote development. We welcome the Secretary-General's unfailing commitment to this cause and the very commendable results that have characterized United Nations action in that regard during the 10 years of his two terms of office. My country is a concrete example of the international community's achievements in this area, as can be seen by the peaceful transfer of power that took place there in March 2006. On behalf of the Government of Benin, I take this opportunity to express once again, from this rostrum, the deep gratitude of the Beninese people for the financial assistance that enabled them to hold timely elections and to peacefully, appropriately and — I might add — very elegantly manage the situations related to those elections.

Young democracies must continue to benefit from effective United Nations support for their consolidation. They must be able to continue to enjoy such support as needed in the coming years. To that end, it is essential that, inter alia, the resources of the United Nations Democracy Fund be swiftly restored so that the Fund can meet the high demand for assistance shown in its first call for project proposals, made in April 2006.

In addition, we commend the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and fully support the implementation of its strategic plan, which would make it possible to significantly enhance its capacity to assist in improving the human rights situation on the ground throughout the world.

In another area, the considerable efforts undertaken to help stricken populations and victims of natural disasters are commendable, as are the measures taken to ensure that such assistance can be provided more swiftly. Here, we join in the Secretary-General's appeal for easier access by humanitarian personnel to victims and for ensuring victims' rights.

Finally, we once again pay tribute to the Secretary-General for having shared with Member States the urgency of the reforms adopted at the 2005 Summit and for having supported, with his proven expertise, the implementation of the agreed measures. We call on Member States to continue the consultations so as to move reform forward in the areas where it is stalled so that we can make the United Nations ever more able to fulfil its role in the survival of humanity and in the quest for suitable solutions to the problems and challenges facing us.

My country commends the great work accomplished by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at the head of the United Nations. We hope that his successor will continue without interruption the projects that have begun for the greater good of the peoples of the United Nations, who continue to place their hopes in the Organization in their quest to achieve well-being and security and to preserve human dignity in the face of known and unknown threats and challenges.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): We would like to thank the Secretary-General not only for his report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), but also, and more important, for the outstanding job that he has done over the past 10 years. During his tenure, the United Nations has had to respond to unpredictable changes and threatening challenges, including an explosion of pandemics worldwide, devastating natural disasters, terrorist attacks around the world, massive starvation among the poorest and international strife at a level never before seen — all documented relentlessly and in real time by the global media.

The United Nations employs 90,000 people and has a yearly budget of $10 billion, and thus is comparable in scale to many international conglomerates. It is commendable that so much has been done with so little, but it is obvious that much more has to be done if we are to be able to deal with the daily challenges of our world. Greater human and financial resources must be deployed to deal with environmental crises and to fund peacekeeping operations, human rights protection efforts, the monitoring of the peaceful use of atomic energy and other initiatives, including those aimed at providing, in a fair and balanced manner, for economic growth for the unprivileged and poor.

We at the United Nations have to do more planning so that we can be prepared to meet the social and economic needs of the world's growing population. We must also act decisively on all of the resolutions approved so far and monitor their implementation.

Under your leadership, Madam, we must remake the General Assembly, according to the Charter, into

the centrepiece of the United Nations structure — a pragmatic and open forum, where problems can be examined and solved in a timely manner in response to the many crises. Moreover, I am sure that all 192 Member States in this Hall agree that the Security Council will be reformed in the near future. San Marino shares the wish of many among us to start anew with fresh, open and transparent negotiations. It is my belief, Madam, that under your leadership this goal will be achieved.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), which places the activities of the United Nations in the context of the challenges that it has had to face following the many major changes that have characterized the international environment over the past 10 years. The report thus provides us with a welcome opportunity to turn our attention for a moment away from current events and to comment on at least some of the milestones that have been reached by the United Nations in its current endeavours.

Much has been said today and over the past few weeks, and I am not going to reiterate our positions on issues of peace, development, human rights or the environment. I will limit my comments to just three areas.

My first comment concerns the structure of the report itself, which reflects the three main areas of focus of United Nations activities: development, which we always understand as sustainable development — meaning that it also needs to take into account the environmental dimension; peace and security; and human rights and democracy.

In our view, the explicit recognition of the interdependence of those areas was a very important conceptual development of the World Summit. The potential consequences of this insight in terms of the way in which we formulate and implement policies are considerable, but a great deal remains to be done in order to systematically translate this new approach into our policies. The ability to work in those three areas, and to do so at both the political and operational levels, is one of the most valuable characteristics of the United Nations.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the Secretary-General's important ideas about the changing role of the State — ideas that underlie many of the paragraphs of the report and even appear to be a common thread running through much of it. We agree with the Secretary-General's assertion that the State has neither withered away nor become redundant — quite the contrary. As societies become ever more complex, as globalization weaves an intricate fabric of relations between individuals and groups, regardless of borders, as significant daily activities in the economic, cultural, religious and social spheres are liberated from direct State control, the role of the State is changing fundamentally. Under such circumstances, the State can no longer act as an administrator; its role is to guarantee rights, and it must be at the service of individuals and communities, acting as a forum, a regulator, an arbitrator or a mediator.

The change in the perception of the State's role is not limited to internal policy, but also has a considerable impact in terms of international relations, as is clearly underscored by the notion of the responsibility to protect, which was affirmed by heads of State or Government at the World Summit.

Another direct consequence of this development for the United Nations concerns the extent and nature of its collaboration with civil society and the business world. The importance of this collaboration is duly reflected in the structure of the report, which devotes an entire chapter to these major global partners. We hope that the United Nations will be able to build on the initiatives and positive experiences of recent years, and thus be able to intensify various forms of collaboration with these essential players in an atmosphere of respect for differences and in accordance with clearly defined rules.

My third comment more directly concerns the United Nations. The Organization is today confronted with many challenges that reflect the growing need for close international cooperation based on law and carried out within the framework of multilateral institutions. Important reform efforts are under way in that context — reforms that must make it possible for the United Nations to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

I would like to refer to just one of those current reform efforts — the one that is both the most visible to the general public and of great symbolic importance, namely, the reform of the Security Council. The nature of contemporary challenges — as the Secretary-General's report confirms — is such that a formula

involving a limited number of States can longer properly respond to today's geopolitical realities. In view of this, Switzerland feels that the expansion of the Security Council should be accompanied by reform of its working methods so as to make it more representative and transparent and to bolster the authority of its decisions.

I cannot conclude my statement on the final report of the current Secretary-General on the work of the Organization without reiterating my country's sincerest thanks to the Secretary-General himself. Over the past 10 years, he has succeeded in clearly identifying the challenges faced by the United Nations as a result of the many and sudden upheavals in the international arena. He has demonstrated wisdom and tenacity in providing Member States with perceptive analyses of such developments, together with proposals for action and reform, which have had an important impact on the political debate and have borne fruit. The current report serves as a final notable example. We warmly congratulate the Secretary-General.

Mr. Abdalhaleem (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his important report on the work of the Organization. It bodes well that the General Assembly is following up the general debate with a discussion of the report on the work of the United Nations — an Organization in which our peoples have placed a great many expectations — including its successes and failures. Although many decades have passed since the United Nations was founded, the Organization is often unable to respond to the aspirations of the founding fathers. This is clearly the case as far as the Security Council is concerned; indeed, it applies specifically to the Security Council, which, given its current undemocratic composition, is actually an obstacle to the achievement of democratic international relations.

The United Nations cannot call for democracy in others when it is unable to achieve real democracy for itself. Through its influential members, the Security Council is often a part of the problem, rather than the solution. If the Organization is to play a new role, it, and the Security Council in particular, must be reformed. If it is not, the Organization will find itself caught up in a vicious circle formed of private agendas and double standards.

We are following with interest the current session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, and hope that the new Council will not suffer the fate of the former Commission. We hope that the Peacebuilding Commission will perform its tasks without infringing upon the mandates of other United Nations organs.

The Secretary-General's report focuses on United Nations cooperation with regional organizations. We hope that the Organization will put its weight behind support for regional organizations, saving money and effort in the process, and allowing them to solve their regional problems by themselves. In that regard, we pay tribute to the excellent role being played by the African Union with respect to the problem of Darfur, and hope that the international community will respect its commitments in supporting the African Union logistically and materially so that it can complete its mandate, implement the Abuja Agreement and promote the progress of peace and stability in my country, launched under the peace agreement for the southern Sudan.

In paying tribute to and expressing appreciation for the role of the African Union, we warn against the hidden agendas of some great Powers to exploit the issue of Darfur as a tool of influence over the Sudan's resources and national decisions. In that regard, if the United Nations is to be effective in this new globalized world, it should shun the private agendas of some of its influential Members that use international forums to serve their own interests. Such behaviour poses a threat to international peace and security.

We appreciate the report's important reference to the special needs of Africa and to support for Africa's development, which must be a priority for the United Nations. The Organization's efforts should also be linked to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which calls for enhanced resources to be directed to Africa, solutions to the debt problem, and special attention to the needs of the least developed countries. We hope that those efforts will also be linked effectively to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

My country attaches special importance to the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. We hope that the Economic and Social Council will play an important role in the follow-up to the commitments made under the MDGs. We must establish indicators for the achievement of the Goals, including analysis of the obstacles to their implementation, so that the developing countries will not be caught up in another

vicious circle of squandering more time and resources. The MDGs should not be relegated to the dustbin of history, as has happened for decades now to the calls for a new international economic order.

The Secretary-General's report, although comprehensive, does not refer to international cooperation in science and technology. We hope that the report submitted to the General Assembly next year will invoke the role of the United Nations in enhancing international cooperation in science and technology among its Members, which is a very important element in promoting sustainable social and economic development for our peoples.

As the United Nations selects its new Secretary-General, we hope that the ultimate choice for that important international post will promote the effectiveness and dynamism of the work and activities of the Organization, as well as its professionalism, neutrality and impartiality. That will strengthen the Organization's cooperation at this very important moment in international relations.

Mr. Zewdie (Ethiopia): My delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and last report on the work of the Organization during his final year in office. My delegation welcomes especially his emphasis on the work of the Organization in implementing the Millennium Declaration. My delegation will briefly comment on both the development and the peace and security issues highlighted in the report.

It is encouraging to note that progress has been made in implementing internationally agreed development goals. It is to be recalled that, prior to the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus and the World Summit on Sustainable Development underlined the need for the allocation of 0.7 per cent of the gross national income of the developed countries to official development assistance (ODA) so that developing countries would be able to achieve internationally agreed development goals. In that regard, it is a positive development that aggregate ODA has increased to $106 billion. As a result, extreme poverty is dropping, while improvements have been shown in child health, sanitation, access to safe water and primary education.

That being the generally positive picture, the challenge remains, however, that the progress is uneven. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the number of people living under the poverty line has not shown any substantial change. As the report on the world social situation in 2005 and the world economic and social survey in 2006 have revealed, the region remains behind others in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General's statement that providing support for Africa is a priority issue for the United Nations.

My country, for its part, is striving to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We have committed the lion's share of the meagre resources at our disposal to the development of infrastructure, improving the social sector and capacity-building, which are needed for our development efforts to succeed. In the last three years, our economy has registered an average growth rate of 9.5 per cent. For the same period, exports grew by 28.5 per cent on average. Primary school enrolment increased from 30 per cent in the early 1990s to 89 per cent at present. In order to improve our capacity for development, 13 additional universities are being built. Based on those encouraging results, a second five- year development programme, known as "Programme for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty", has been developed and is under implementation. Alleviating poverty by meeting the Millennium Development Goals remains the cornerstone of our development programme.

It is in this regard that we fully subscribe to the recommendations of the Secretary-General, namely incorporating new targets in the MDGs — to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015, to provide access by all that require it to HIV treatment by 2010, and to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

With regard to peace and security, the report indicates that the annual budget of the Organization allocated to peacekeeping and other field operations has increased substantially. It also states that half of the world's conflicts and peacekeeping operations are in Africa. While it is encouraging that the Organization is paying due attention to resolving conflicts in Africa, it is also an indication that the challenge to bring about peace on the continent is a tremendous one. Africa, more than ever before, needs more resources for its own socio-economic development to improve the living standards of its peoples. It is therefore disappointing that conflict resolution absorbs the lion's share of the resources of the United Nations.

It is for that reason that my country has been striving for peace and security in its region for many years now. As is well known, Ethiopia is among the troop- contributing countries in peacekeeping operations in our region. We are currently participating in Liberia and have successfully completed the Mission in Burundi. We have also dispatched our observers to Côte d'Ivoire. We believe that by working in close cooperation with other member countries that the peacekeeping and mediation capacities of the African Union could be strengthened and ensured. That is why the Secretary-General stressed in his report the need to have the support of the international community to strengthen national and regional efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and creating conditions for peace.

Finally, let me reiterate once again that Ethiopia, as it has been doing thus far, will continue to actively participate in the activities of the United Nations, with a view to making our world a safer and more peaceful place.

The President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): As we consider the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, my delegation would like to thank him and his staff for their work in the field and on this comprehensive report.

As has often been said, reform is not an event but a process, and this year marks an important occasion aimed at ensuring that these processes continue. To that end, we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts in continuing to press for reform. The creation of a mediation support capacity within the Department of Political Affairs is an example of how existing structures can be successfully modified to address global needs. However, despite the progress made, much work remains to be done in many different areas.

We share the Secretary-General's views on the importance of conflict prevention and the responsibility to protect. At the same time, we would like to stress the need to interconnect more explicitly and more effectively the areas of security and development. The present lack of progress in the fields of development aid and trade reform threatens everyone's security and well-being. By contrast, the fulfilment of the Millennium Development (MDGs) promises economic progress, the alleviation of poverty, a reduction in terrorism and increased social harmony.

At recent conferences and meetings on disarmament, my delegation expressed its deep concern at the stagnation of the multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The United Nations system as a whole should grasp this opportunity to acknowledge the links between disarmament, development and humanitarian concerns, and commit itself to strategies and programmes to reduce the demand for arms and armed violence.

In the area of humanitarian assistance, the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund and the innovative cluster coordination system are important modifications to the existing humanitarian assistance system. My delegation looks forward to closely following their development. In coordinating humanitarian relief, the United Nations should continue to play a leading role in balancing the autonomy of civil society actors with the need to provide effective aid to the most vulnerable.

My delegation agrees with the observation made in the report that a great deal of progress has been achieved in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. Nevertheless, while the pandemic seems to be under control in certain countries, many other countries appear to be almost helpless in tackling the spread of HIV/AIDS. We would do well to face this issue with more focused initiatives, learning, for example, from the specific actions taken in the field of foreign debt with the highly indebted poorest countries. A concentration of our financial, logistical and human resources would enable the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS to put an end to that scourge and consolidate the hope that humankind will overcome the pandemic worldwide.

While greater efforts are needed to ensure that all the commitments of 2005 are fulfilled, it is important to understand the breadth of the commitments that were made. The World Summit Outcome Document was a carefully negotiated and well-crafted document that sought to balance strongly held views. It is therefore of the utmost importance that in implementing this document we ensure that respect for that delicate balance is maintained. To that end, it is important to reaffirm that ensuring access to reproductive health by 2015, as referenced in paragraph 24, was seen by our leaders as a means of achieving the target of reducing maternal mortality rather than as a target in and of itself.

Finally, it is our sincere hope that this session of the General Assembly will continue to move from commitments to action and that the United Nations can continue the process of transforming itself into an institution that is ready for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/195 of 17 December 1999, I now call on the observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Mr. Baghwat-Singh (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources): The report on the work of the Organization is always a comprehensive document containing an overview of United Nations activities and programmes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) will comment on issues related to the environment and conservation.

The General Assembly expressed concern about the slow and uneven progress towards poverty eradication and reaffirmed the international commitment to more effectively advance the fundamental objectives of economic development with a focus on implementing a global partnership for development. However, this commitment was not effectively conveyed by most States with very few references made to environmental concerns during the first two weeks of the general debate.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) welcomes all development commitments, but emphasizes the lack of current environmental commitments and the lack of urgency within such commitments. This has allowed already slow progress to be further hampered by such factors as the increased frequency and magnitude of natural disasters and conflicts. The IUCN therefore calls for even greater and a more urgent commitment from the international community to poverty eradication and to the environmental improvements that are fundamental in assuring and enhancing gains for the overall well-being and economic development of the poor.

The IUCN would like the United Nations to consider providing further mandates on broad questions regarding environmental issues. The agreements reached during informal consultations held during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly regarding the institutional framework for the environmental activities of the United Nations system, included suggestions for enhanced coordination, improved policy guidance, strengthened scientific knowledge, enhanced treaty compliance and better integration of environmental activities in the economic development framework at an operational level. The IUCN increases the implementation of these ideas in support of potential mandates on broad environmental interests.

Moreover, the IUCN anticipates the future recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, specifically relating to environmental matters such as water resources, desertification, trade, biodiversity, natural resources, climate change and deforestation. The IUCN appreciates the recognition of the importance of strengthening ties with civil society and hopes that these suggestions will be taken up by States and organizations in their programmes of work.

We believe that environmental sustainability is one of the main pillars of the global fight against poverty — that poverty eradication can only be achieved if the world's ecosystems, which sustain people's well-being, are conserved and properly managed. The experience of the IUCN and many other organizations involved in the conservation and development of communities clearly indicates that there is a direct relationship between the health of ecosystems and the opportunities of the impoverished to increase their food security, improve their health, build assets, reduce risks and have more secure lives. Conversely land degradation, desertification, pollution, increasing greenhouse gas emissions and unequal access to water and productive ecosystems are all associated with a decline in human well-being. Sustainable development can be achieved only through an increased awareness of the intrinsic necessity of environmental preservation.

The IUCN believes that in order to truly implement a global partnership for development environmental interests should be fully considered within United Nations policies and processes in support of economic development. The IUCN, having a membership of 42 States, is the only body possessing and able to contribute to the scientific background and expertise of the United Nations in the field of environmental conservation. Our work on improving coastal ecosystems, our water and nature initiatives, the work that we do on forests and landscapes, our

fisheries strategies and our recent conference on biodiversity in European development cooperation all highlight the very real value of our work.

We would like the General Assembly to keep a continual focus on the necessity of preserving our planet and the richness of its human and natural resources. The IUCN has a deep commitment to working to make conservation and the management of natural resources more effective in addressing poverty. We stand ready to support the Assembly's efforts in this regard.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/61/1 and corrigendum 1?

It was so decided.

The President: I call now on those delegations wishing to make statements on the decision the Assembly has just taken.

Mr. Dugan (United States of America): Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, document A/61/1, addresses a subject area as comprehensive as any report's. There are many things in the report on which we could comment, as others have done in today's consideration.

The Assembly just "took note" of the Secretary-General's report. The effect of taking note by the Assembly should not be construed, as is commonly understood, as formal endorsement of the report's content, including its proposals. In particular, my delegation draws the Assembly's attention to paragraph 24 of the report. The United States does not agree with the Secretary-General's proposal in paragraph 24 to add or develop additional targets with regard to the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals were just defined by the 2005 World Summit as the development goals and objectives that had been agreed upon at the Millennium Summit. Those goals were defined by the World Summit last year and should not be changed.

Mr. Steeghs (Netherlands): By taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1), the General Assembly has endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General to incorporate four new targets into the framework used to follow up on the Millennium Declaration. As the Secretary-General states in his report on the work of the Organization, those targets were agreed upon by our leaders at the 2005 World Summit. In our opinion, the Secretary-General had therefore already been given the mandate to include these commitments in the aforementioned framework.

There is international consensus that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the global compact for development. They constitute the framework within which cooperation with our partner countries takes place. They represent a partnership of countries determined to create an environment which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty.

In order to assess and monitor progress towards the MDGs, these goals are operationalized in terms of targets and indicators. The goals, targets and indicators should form a comprehensive, coherent and consistent monitoring framework for the MDGs. We have always held the view that the monitoring framework could and should be further improved. We believe that the inclusion of the four new targets as recommended by the Secretary-General will significantly strengthen the framework. Full and productive employment and decent work, universal access to reproductive health, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS and reduction of loss of biodiversity are crucial for achieving the MDGs.

We therefore strongly support the recommendation of the Secretary-General and hope that work will start soon to select the appropriate indicators.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 102?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.